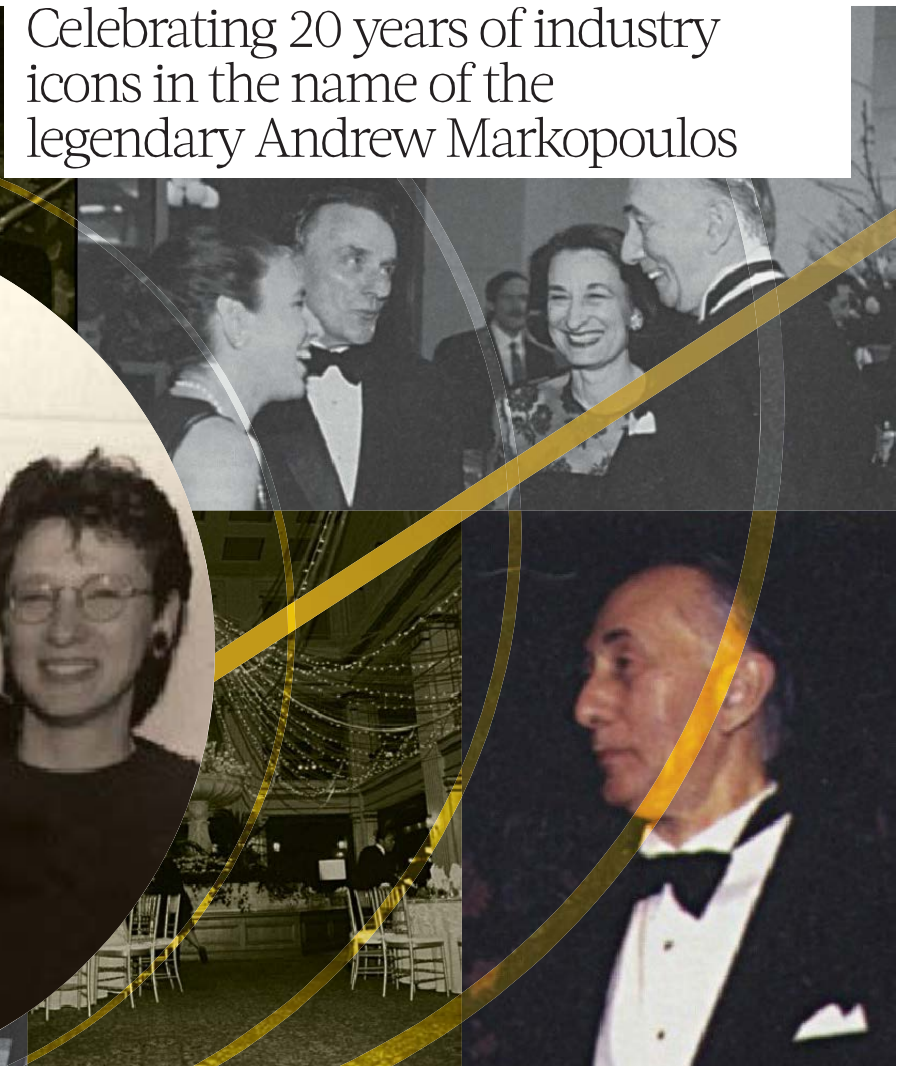




The Markopoulos Circle

By JENNY S. REBHOLZ

Celebrating 20 years of industry icons in the name of the legendary Andrew Markopoulos



1997



IGNAZ GORISCHEK

A

n Emmy, a Grammy, an Oscar...these are prestigious awards for their respective industries. And while the prestige and honor of the awards remain, how many truly know the story of their origin, their historical roots? While the Emmy is celebrating its 67th year, the Grammy its 58th and the Oscar its 88th, in the retail design industry, the Markopoulos Award is celebrating 20 years. This award may have a shorter history than the aforementioned, but it recognizes truly outstanding achievement and contributions in visual merchandising and store design. It is the most prestigious award in the retail industry, named after the late visual merchandising legend Andrew Markopoulos.

Markopoulos set the bar high with his captivating store design and visual merchandising work, his leadership and innovation for Dayton-Hudson, as well as his commitment to mentoring and nurturing the next generation of retail talent. Every year, with each new recipient, the bar remains high and challenges professionals to do more and be more, to continue to elevate the industry.

There is one celebrated industry professional for each year of the award, so this is an exciting time to reflect on 20 years and 20 award winners. The recipients are nominated by peers and selected by The Markopoulos Circle of previous recipients based on their lifetime achievements and overall career accomplishments, their ability to innovate and inspire, their contributions to the success of a particular retailer or company, their ability to nurture and mentor young talent, and their ongoing contributions and support of the retail design and visual industries. The recipients are admirable role models on both a professional and personal level.

It is an important time in the history of this award to remember the man it was named after—Andrew Markopoulos—and the qualities he represents. We reached out to our past award winners to offer them a chance to reminisce about Andy, to celebrate their cherished memories of their friendship with him, their professional encounters with him or their knowledge of him. It is our hope that Andy's influence on the industry continues onward, so that the Markopoulos legacy can continue, and the significance of the award can be maintained for generations to come.

1998



TONY MANCINI

1999


**JUDY
BELL**

Winning the Markopoulos Award was a moment of pure joy. I have loved working in the design industry since my first display job carrying around my industrial toolbox in my painter pants, earning only \$2 an hour, right up to this very day. To be recognized for that passion was a genuine gift. My heart was pounding as I waited in the audience for the awards event to begin. I carried the trophy with me all night as I attended parties around Chicago after the event. I didn't want to put it down.

Andy's legacy was to encourage visual merchandisers to be fully engaged in the retail design industry, participating on boards, speaking on panels, teaching and leading. Andy's goals live on as we act as his emissaries, and set an example for others to continue on the path he laid out for us, which contributes to the success of the entire industry.



2000

JAMES MANSOUR

Andrew was a titan who ruled department stores when department stores ruled retail. Over the years as we became friends, he never grandstanded. He didn't need to—he had the total support of his CEO (and an enviable budget), as well as the passionate commitment of his co-workers. I was a brash young insurgent on a mission to revolutionize specialty retailing. While we were competitors, he was always gracious and encouraging.

Two mementos from Andrew:

1. A photo of me seated between my proud parents with Andrew leaning in to offer congratulations on winning a Visual Merchandiser of the Year award (which hung in my parents home to the end).

2. A beautiful Bohemian glass Christmas ornament Andrew gave to me after a junket to Czechoslovakia. A devoted family man, it's not surprising Christmas was his favorite season.

As an early recipient of the Markopoulos Award, it was a phenomenal honor. I choked up when I took the stage to accept.

**LINDA
FARGO**


2001

The thing that brought Andy and I together in the late 1970s was a common ground of good manners and impeccable presentation. He was very articulate. I was attracted to that type of presence early in my career. He represented the ideal that you must present yourself at the highest standard, or your work will fall short. Andy and I shared that connection. When I started in the industry, I was drawn to the department store window. His had a sense of personal innate style and was committed to educating himself in a worldly manner. He had a Greek background, traveled Europe and educated himself. Andy was a pioneer in breaking the glass ceiling in making taste and design the being and presence of Dayton-Hudson.

He made display a profit center. He was the one who broke through and had such a good rapport with management, and that intersection between design and corporate. Andrew was more than a display man, visual merchandiser or store designer. He gave credibility and respect to our craft in the world of business.

**JAMES
DAMIAN**


2005

2002

**CHARLES LUCKENBILL**

After leaving Dayton-Hudson, I called Andy to ask for advice on decision making. He said, "Always trust your instincts, because you will find them to be right." It was a short conversation, but good advice that I have always remembered.

When we took market trips with Andy, he always took the time to take us on a side trip—if we were in San Francisco, we would go to Muir Woods or Sausalito. In New York, it would be The Cloisters, the Morgan Library or the Met at Christmas. When asked why, he said, "Because it's good for your soul. You will see how it will help you later." He believed in going off the beaten path, as it supports the out-of-the-box thinking process. A few years after the Muir Woods trip, we were working on a campaign called Boundary Waters. My mind went back to that trip as we began creating our own little Muir Woods in the stores.

Andy was a dapper dresser. Casual for him meant white slacks with pleats and a shirt and sweater, with another sweater draped over his shoulders. On our trip to Sausalito, a few fellow travelers on the ferry were mockingly admiring his perfect attire, and as they did, a number of seagulls added poop to their wardrobe. Andy laughed and said to us, "You have to watch what you say. God will get you."

As an award recipient, it is an honor to be recognized by the industry and my peers. It is an honor to become part of a prestigious and elite group of 20 people over 20 years. As recipients, it is our duty to carry forward his high standard of design excellence and his belief in giving back to the industry. As one of the few professionals in this group who has reported directly to Andy, I feel that it is a true honor of his memory. He was a professional father figure to me, and that personal connection and gratitude that I have toward him was strengthened with this award.

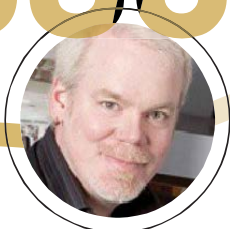
Andy is one of the few leaders responsible for elevating our jobs to become a profession, from display people and window trimmers to visual merchants. He believed and nurtured his teams to have the courage of their convictions. He led by example. He always carried himself as a leader and as a professional, and taught us all the importance of that. He set a standard for the industry, a standard of professionalism, of how to present yourself in a manner that will be listened to and taken seriously by management when you try to sell an idea. He was a master collaborator. He brought key people to the table as an idea was forming, so that when it was time to present to the decision makers, he had everyone on the same page.

At Andy's funeral, the priest told what might be a familiar story about a man passing away and when he gets to heaven, St. Peter is showing him around God's mansion. There is another man running around, moving art and putting everything in its place. The man on the tour asks St. Peter, "Is that God?" St. Peter replies, "No, that is Andrew Markopoulos." Those at the funeral knew this to be a true depiction.

2003
SIMON DOONAN**CHRISTINE
BELICH**

2004

2006

**MICHAEL
CAPE**2007
**JACK
HRUSKA**

ALFREDO PAREDES



2008



2009 RALPH PUCCI

Andy was always looking for newness, freshness...what's next. In 1994, I introduced the TANGO collection designed by the author/illustrator Maira Kalman. He loved the colorful personalities of each character. He was so excited. At the time, Dayton-Hudson was developing a new concept to introduce workday casual clothing. It was going to be the store's biggest launch in years. He proposed to his management eight to 10 Kalman mannequins dressed in "workday casual" at all the store entrances as "greeters," a total of 500 mannequins. Management felt it was exciting and unique, but too expensive. He was asked to come back with another idea. He re-thought his idea and came back with a new proposal. This time there would be 1,000 Maira Kalman mannequins with their images also used on shopping bags, billboards, television commercials and as the "models" in the Dayton-Hudson catalog. Management loved the idea and went for it. That was Andy Markopoulos, always the showman, always pushing the envelope, always looking to create the WOW. Years later, a top Dayton-Hudson executive told me that the workday casual launch was the "biggest bang for the buck" that he was ever involved with in retail.

I met Andy when I was 21 years old. He became my mentor and dear friend. He always encouraged me to take chances and to be different, to take it to uncharted waters.

Andy was always trying to elevate the visual merchandising field by creating unique, quality work. He thought of the big picture—the blending of visual, store planning, marketing and fashion to create a unique brand. He felt the visual field was under-appreciated and had to constantly "challenge" top management to take it to the next level. Through his extraordinary style, professionalism and demanding the best from everyone, he became a legend. Through his consistency and clear message, his legend is still relevant today.

I met Andy in the early '70s when he was running the visual merchandising department for Dayton-Hudson. The irony is that 30 years later, Macy's (my current employer) owns that building, and even when you walk through it today, you see the remnants of his influence in a piece of furniture or an architectural detail. His story is one of "bloom where you are planted." He was in Minneapolis, not New York, but he was able to create a profound influence on the industry. I always found it interesting how he was able to influence his peers, and he didn't need an international platform or stage to create that. I like to ponder what he would be doing today with all of the tools, technology and social media channels at his disposal. He would continue to be a larger-than-life figure.

We were planning to do a remodel in the downtown Minneapolis store, so we had a meeting to discuss what to do with the huge video wall that he created with 40 television monitors (the old-school large and heavy monitors). It was still functioning; the question was whether to remove it or update it. We updated it. It is amazing that 30 years ago he recognized the coming of video and incorporated it into retail.

So many people don't know his background and history. We need to educate and remind people about the legends of our industry and how they were breaking ground into new media then. We need to keep that spirit alive.

Andrew was a game changer and constantly curious. He challenged his staff to raise the bar. He went overseas to Europe and Asia to gain inspiration well before it was fashionable. He was in the Midwest, but had an international attitude about work and what he brought to it. He was sophisticated, educated and cultured; there were no barriers to get in his way. He was always interested in who was working on what.

I am fortunate to be part of this industry, and for such a long time. To be recognized by your peers is the greatest form of flattery. We are a group of people that are part of the same industry, and although there is competitive spirit, we help one another.

JOSEPH FECZKO



2012

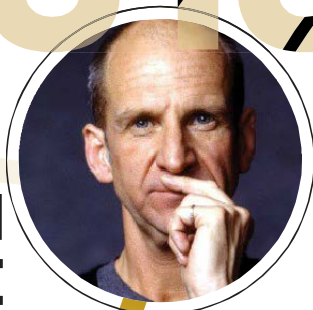


ERIC FEIGENBAUM

2010

045

**TOM
BEEBE**



He had an amazing reputation. I really only saw him at social events in Manhattan. He was the quintessential gentleman; a grand dresser with such a cultivated presence, a diamond in the rough. He would walk in with an entourage, an amazing magic around him. He always had a flower or pocket square, or one thing that made him edgy and elegant. As a young designer, you would think, "Who is that guy?!" and being in menswear I was in awe of his presence. He cultivated the world around him.

The Markopoulos Award is the quintessential award for the visual field. For me, it was a huge sign that I was taking the right path returning to visual after being in editorial for a while. It is a peer award. It is such a specialized and competitive field, and sometimes we know more about each other's work than the people themselves. The timing of this award is crucially important when you look at the people who have received it and what they have accomplished at that time. It is beyond just the work and about the contribution to the industry and mentoring.

**DENNY
GERDEMAN**



2011

More than 25 years ago, as we were starting Chute Gerdeman, I had the opportunity to present a Champion Athletic Apparel shop concept for Dayton-Hudson to Andrew in his Minneapolis office. He suggested we meet at 11:30 a.m. in his office to have lunch and discuss the project. When I arrived, there was a table with full linens set for us, and we spent time talking. He wanted to get to know me first. We eventually discussed the project, but it was an experience I always remember. I felt so respected, so I wanted to work even harder. He was relaxed, accommodating and gracious. I admired how elegantly he handled things and how overly respectful he was, especially to me as a younger designer at the time. He took the time to get to know me and didn't rush me through to "process me." When he critiqued you, you realized how knowledgeable he was and how much better his suggestions made the project.

Andrew was bigger than life, but not in a flamboyant way. He had something special about him. He was gracious. He cared for and took care of the people around him. There was such a confidence about him, but not arrogance. In his role, he listened to and involved people and got them to work together. He is renowned for his touch, his flair, his nurturing. His mentoring impacted so many people in this industry.

It is such an honor to be selected by elite peers in the business. To be vetted by that group and selected was humbling and staggering, I was shocked. It is the biggest and best honor in the industry. The award represents what he stood for. It goes to someone who is very whole, someone who is good in many areas, including being involved in the industry, the community and mentoring.

2014

**HARRY
CUNNINGHAM**



I was in such a pivotal point in my career, as senior vice president of store planning, design and visual merchandising for Saks Fifth Avenue, when I received the Markopoulos Award. It is one of the absolute highlights

of my career. Being a recipient of this award allows me to tell Andy's story longer and share with more future retailers, visual merchandisers and designers the importance of being well rounded and never forgetting why we are all here. We are storytellers, and we must always stay true to that legacy. No technology can ever replace that; it only enhances that. I'm sure that if Andy was with us today, he'd be thinking of amazing ways to reinvent what we do using all our current tools in only the best ways.

As we in The Markopoulos Circle talk every time we're together, whether it is two of us, or now 20 of us, we're constantly reminded of the importance of being well rounded in this industry, and how each one of us must continue to uphold Andy's legacy. That legacy is not only pushing this industry forward by creating amazing things for our business—whether that be new store designs, display windows or seasonal installations—but also how we are educating and supporting that next generation every single day.

Without them, we are nothing, and they equally need us to help guide them into the future.

2015

**KEN
SMART**



2016

**BILL
GODDU**



(See page 37 of this issue for more details on our 2016 Markopoulos Award recipient, Bill Goddu.)

dar